

Hope, context, and equity:

Existing shortcomings and implications for future research on hope in children.

THE GIST: Hope is a relatively young topic in psychology, beginning in the '90s with increased interest in positive psychology and human flourishing. We reviewed other studies on hope, specifically looking at hope's influence on child development. Besides reviewing hope literature, we raise suggestions for future studies and bring attention to the shortcomings of previous research. There is room for growth, and future research could be improved by acknowledging social and contextual factors in fostering hope. Social and contextual factors matter because children learn and adapt to constantly shifting environments. Hope may be a part of that adaptation that leads to well-being. It is renewable and evolving, with some researchers considering hope an "equity solution that increases motivation and sense of belonging."

THE TAKEAWAY: Hope promotes positive life outcomes for children. It supports children in overcoming adversity, helping them improve academically and have better mental health. Hope is possibly the most beneficial to children experiencing disadvantaged circumstances, providing children that resource we turn to when we "dig deep within ourselves." Further research on hope should aim to explore hope across childhood and contextualize hope in ways that improve our understanding of hope as an indicator of thriving.